



## Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of the Meeting Held on 27 January 2022  
at 10 am at County Hall Norwich

### Present:

Cllr Steve Morphew (Chair)

Cllr Lana Hemsall (Vice Chair)

Cllr Carl Annison

Cllr Lesley Bambridge

Cllr Barry Duffin

Cllr Phillip Duigan (Sub for Cllr Nick  
Daubney)

Cllr Mark Kiddle-Morris

Cllr Keith Kiddie

Cllr Ed Maxfield

Cllr Jamie Osborn

Cllr Richard Price

Cllr Brian Watkins

### Parent Governor representative

Mr Giles Hankinson

### Also present (who took a part in the meeting):

Cllr Margaret Dewsbury

Cllr Tom FitzPatrick

Cllr Greg Peck

Cllr Jamieson

Cllr Bill Borrett

Cllr Tim Adams

Cllr Emma Corlett

Cllr Brenda Jones

Cllr Maxine Webb

Simon George

Ceri Sumner

Denise Saadvandi

Simon Hughes

Jeannine de Sousa

James Bullion

Peter Randall

Kat Hulatt

Tim Shaw

Cabinet Member for Communities and Partnerships

Cabinet Member for Innovation, Transformation and Performance

Cabinet Member for Commercial Services and Asset Management

Cabinet Member for Finance

Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health and  
Prevention

Cllr for call in of Key Decision: ASSD Service Review –  
Transformation and Prevention in Adult Social Care.

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Executive Director of Finance and Commercial Services

Director, Community, Information and Learning

Head of Service Adult Learning

Director of Property

Capital Projects & Facilities Manager

Executive Director of Adult Social Services

Democratic Support and Scrutiny Manager

Head of Legal Services

Committee Officer

## **1. Apologies for Absence**

- 1.1 Apologies were received from Cllr Graham Carpenter, Cllr Nick Daubney, Mrs Julie O' Connor (Church Representative) and Mr Paul Dunning (Church Representative)

## **2 Minutes**

- 2.1 The minutes of the previous meetings held on 24 November 2021 and 15 December 2021 and the notes of the scrutiny meeting held on 15 December 2021 were confirmed as an accurate record and signed by the Chair.

## **3. Declarations of Interest**

- 3.1 There were no declarations of interest,

## **4 Urgent Business**

- 4.1 No urgent business was discussed.

## **5. Public Question Time**

- 5.1 There were no public questions.

## **6. Local Member Issues/Questions**

- 6.1 There were no local member issues/questions.

## **7 Call In**

- 7.1 The Committee noted that there was one call in to be taken at item 8 of today's agenda.

## **8 Call-In of Key Decision: ASSD Service Review – Transformation and Prevention in Adult Social Care.**

- 8.1 The annexed report (8) related to the call-in of the Cabinet decision of 12 January 2022: ASSD Service Review – Transformation and Prevention in Adult Social Care.

- 8.2 The Chair explained the way in which he would handle this item to best ensure a fair and balanced scrutiny process and to decide what (if any) issues the Committee would refer to the Cabinet. The options that were available to the Committee were set out in the report.

- 8.3 The Chair welcomed to the meeting Cllr Tim Adams, Cllr Emma Corlett, Cllr Brenda Jones and Cllr Maxine Webb the Councillors who had called in the item who explained the reasons for having done so. They asked questions of Cllr Bill Borrett (Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health and Prevention) and of the officers that were present for the consideration of this item.

- 8.4 The issues that were considered by the Committee included the following:

- Those Cllrs who had called in the item asked the Committee to consider how the decision was made, how the claimed benefits would be accurately assessed, and how the proceeds would be ring-fenced within adult social care. They said that the call-in was about the process by which the decision was made and the financial and governance arrangements with Newton Europe. They also said there was no consultation with service users in advance of the decision taken by Cabinet. As a major strategic decision this should have been taken by Full Council and included an assessment of the information about Newton Europe available from Leicestershire. There was a significant risk to the Council in making a payment to Newton Europe of £6.5m and savings were not possible on this scale without service reductions.
- Those Cllrs who had called in the item also spoke about how this was a major strategic decision for the Council and should therefore be taken by Council not Cabinet. Also, the role of Select Committees was to develop policy framework and review performance in relation to policy objectives and targets but this was not done. The effectiveness of Newton Europe's work with Councils in Leicestershire needed due consideration based on reports last month that over 2,500 residents in that county were awaiting assessments of their social care needs, despite implementing a Target Operating Model designed with Newton Europe.
- The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health and Prevention and the Executive Director said that the proposal was about how ASSD could better align its Front Door strategy, including managing ASSD demand, with its overall outcomes and the Promoting Independence Strategy (the current Adult Social Care Strategy) which was agreed by the Adult Social Care Committee in 2017. The Strategy had not been rewritten since then and remained essentially the same. It was for this reason that the Cabinet Member had not consulted with the Chair of the People and Communities Select Committee about the proposal before the publication of the Cabinet papers.
- In reply to questions the Cabinet Member and the Executive Director said that the proposal was an invest to save project. It was just one policy strand of several other areas of the Promoting Independence Strategy. The relevant skill sets that supported change existed both inside and outside ASSD, but very limited capacity inside ASSD prevented progress without a partnership with another organisation such as Newton Europe. ASSD was not designed to bring about the level of change that was required on its own.
- In reply to further questions, it was explained why the involvement of Newton Europe was a "partnership" and that this did not imply that it was intended to outsource delivery or governance of Adult Social Care. ASSD was committed to the co-design of its services and to making the benefits of its Front Door strategy accessible to all service users.
- Several other councils across the country were taking a similar approach to that being taken by the County Council.

- The Chair said that the Select Committee would have “added value” to the proposal if they had been given an opportunity to examine the alternatives, the specifications for working with Newton Europe and to influence the decision.
- The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health and Prevention said that this project was being treated in the same way as other invest to save projects that came before Cabinet. The £6.5m was not available for alternative uses and was only available as a spend to save project arising from these specific service changes.
- The Cabinet Member for Innovation, Transformation and Performance said that the decision was partly about improving the digital means whereby the public communicated with the Council and it would have been wrong for the procurement process to have been influenced by individual Councillors.
- The Executive Director said that the procurement process for the selection of Newton Europe had involved a formal selection process. The fee was based on payment by results and 100% contingent on savings being evidenced. Every £1 paid to Newton Europe had to have at least £1.50 in savings. The contract would be paid monthly and will be audited. Newton Europe would over the life of the contract be transferring skills and expertise to ASSD and Corporate Transformation staff.
- Periodic progress reports would be made to the Cabinet and the Select Committee. The ownership of key decisions would remain with the Council.
- At the end of the debate (and before a motion was formally put to the Committee) the Chair said that it was unclear how many policies still existed within the Council’s Major Policy Framework that preceded the introduction of the Cabinet system and had not been refreshed or reviewed or reached a “sell by” date placed on them. This important question needed to be answered outside of this meeting and perhaps was a matter for the Corporate Select Committee to examine.

8.5 It was then moved and duly seconded that the Committee refer the decision back to Cabinet so that they could be asked to seek the views of the Select Committee and consult with service users before making the decision. Furthermore, Cabinet should be asked to publish the full diagnostic evidence for their decision, the methodology behind the triggering of payments to Newton Europe and take steps to ensure that any savings remained in the ASSD budget.

**On being put to the vote the motion was LOST on a show of hands**

**It was then RESOLVED on a show of hands**

**That the Committee notes the call in but takes no further action.**

**Holocaust Memorial Day**

At this point in proceedings, because this was Holocaust Memorial Day, Members of the Committee and others who were present in the meeting joined in one minute

of silence with communities around the world to remember the millions of people killed in the Holocaust, under Nazi persecution and the genocides which had since taken place in Cambodia, Rwanda, Bosnia, and Darfur.

## 9 **Review of the performance of the Adult Learning Service**

9.1 The Committee received the attached report (9) about the performance of the Adult Learning Service, an Ofsted-rated 'Good' Further Education Adult and Community Education provider, that is externally funded through grant funding from central Government through the Department for Education's Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) and tuition fee income.

9.2 During discussion of the report with Cllr Margaret Dewsbury (Cabinet Member for Communities and Partnerships) and the officers who were present for the consideration of this item the following key points were noted:

- The Cabinet Member explained the ongoing transformational journey of the Adult Learning Service in adapting to changes brought about by the pandemic and the impressive way in which the Service had adapted to online learning.
- The latest feedback from service users had shown that 97% of learners were satisfied with their courses (at a time of national lockdown when services were being delivered in restricted circumstances) and that 86 % of learners had achieved a positive outcome from their learning.
- Less than 200 learners dropped out of adult learning courses at the start of the pandemic, when courses moved online although there were a few areas of the Adult Learning Curriculum that could not be accessed on-line and had to be suspended.
- In the current academic year (in Sept 2021) some 50 % of courses remain available on-line. Some of the courses that were run in person remained restricted by social distancing rules.
- In future the Service aimed to provide a hybrid service model whereby on-line services were provided in combination with classroom learning.
- The Service was highly regarded nationally and had achieved two prestigious awards which were listed in the report.
- The Service was aiming for its next self-assessment and next Ofsted report to show it to be outstanding.
- The Service was in tune in with the strategic direction of the Council and that of other public sector bodies. This was achieved by working jointly with (amongst many others) libraries and museums teams and learning teams within Children's Services and the Careers Service.
- In reply to questions, it was noted that the achievement rates for those undertaking courses to become teaching assistants in Norfolk's schools would be shared with Cllrs after the meeting.
- In the last 12 months 79 people had completed an apprenticeship with adult education, a figure that was expected to triple over the next 2-3 years.

- Councillors stressed the importance of providing qualifications and apprenticeship courses for the construction industry that included the learning of retrofitting skills. In reply officers said that the construction offer within the Adult Learning Curriculum was new from January 2022 with 123 learners having started on a basis level course and that Adult Learning intends to develop into qualifications and environmental sustainability programmes in the 2022/23 academic year.
- The Service had secured over £500,000 from the community renewal fund to provide for two construction hubs in Norwich and King's Lynn which would provide construction training, including the training of retrofitthers. The curriculum manager for these courses was taking a lead in working with the awarding body to develop the qualifications in retrofitting that were needed for the future. The LEP and District Councils were fully in support of the training provided for those looking to work in all aspects of the construction industry.
- In reply to questions from the Chair about how the success of the Council's digital inclusion strategy depended on the Service taking steps to address a lack of basic Maths and English literacy skills in some disadvantaged communities' officers said that that the service is embedding digital skills into its English and maths learning programmes.
- The Vice Chair spoke about the importance of the work undertaken by the Service in bridging the skills gaps for those with protected characteristics. Throughout the pandemic the service had actively targeted Norfolk's most disadvantaged communities.

### 9.3 **RESOLVED**

- **That Scrutiny Committee place on record their thanks and congratulations to the Adult Learning Service staff on the exceptional performance of the Service.**
- **That the Committee also place on record thanks to the officers who attended the meeting for this item for their helpful and informative answers to Councillors questions.**

## 10 **Major Estate renovation projects and consolidation of office space**

10.1 The annexed report (10) was received.

10.2 The Committee received a report from the Director of Property that explained how the Corporate Property Team (CPT) had gone about the repair and refurbishment of the County Hall building to provide safe and secure accommodation for staff and visitors. One of the early key actions taken by the CPT was the establishment of The Total FM approach whereby all the facilities management functions of the County Council were centrally coordinated, using properly procured suppliers for professional, maintenance and cleaning services. This had established appropriate workmanship standards, provided a consistent level of service, ensured statutory testing/servicing was undertaken as well as achieving significant savings.

10,3 During discussion of the report with Cllr Greg Peck (Cabinet Member for Commercial Services and Asset Management), Cllr Tom FitzPatrick (Cabinet Member for Innovation, Transformation and Performance) and the officers who were present for the consideration of this item the following key points were noted:

- The Cabinet Member said that prior to the decision made in 2012 to undertake a major programme of repairs and refurbishment to the County Hall building it had suffered from historic under investment. As the project to renovate the building had progressed examples of poor workmanship and of underinvestment became apparent.
- The latest work on the north wing of the building was a 20- month project, completed in 8 months and delivered under budget.
- Following the completion of the refurbishment work in December 2021, the County Hall building was fit for the 21st century, environmentally friendly and accessible to everyone, allowing for colocation of services and better use to be made of the building. This had resulted in a better environment for disabled people wanting to work for the County Council.
- The Cabinet Member thanked the contractor, Mace, for the professional way in which they had completed the maintenance work. The Committee placed on record thanks the Corporate Property Team (CPT) and to Jeannine de Sousa for overseeing the work and for the successful conclusion of the project.
- The Committee noted the building work was awarded and short listed for numerous prestigious awards. The Total FM approach adopted by the CPT would ensure that County Hall maintenance was undertaken in a timely way and help protect the capital investment made over the last few years.
- Cllrs spoke about how the original report and building of county hall had been a long time ago and too long ago to unpick what happened at that time but lessons needed learning, and for the future it looked like they had.
- Cllrs were asked to feedback comments about the maintenance of County Hall to the Norse help desk (details about how to do this would appear in the next member briefing).
- It was pointed out that the Council was committed to a procurement framework to decarbonise buildings. The use of gas in County Hall had reduced by 73% since 2011. Electricity usage had reduced by 11% over the same period.
- Cllrs spoke about how a new policy framework for carbon reduction at County hall should also apply to carbon reduction programmes at the Norfolk Record Office.
- Cllrs also spoke about how access improvements at County Hall should allow for further improvements in walking and cycling and bus routes into County Hall.

10.4 **RESOLVED**

- **That the Committee place on record thanks to Simon Hughes, Jeannine de Sousa and other members of the Corporate Property Team (CPT) for the professional way in which they have gone about the repair and refurbishment of the County Hall building and for putting in place a proactive maintenance schedule for the building that will help protect the capital investment made over the last few years.**

## 11 **Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement 2022-23**

11.1 The annexed report (11) was received.

11.2 The Committee discussed with Cllr Jamieson (Cabinet Member for Finance) and Simon George (the Executive Director of Finance and Commercial Services) a report that updated Councillors on details surrounding the Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement 2022-23 announced by central government on 16 December 2021, outlining implications for the wider NCC budget setting process for 2022-23.

11.3 During discussion the following points were made:

- The Provisional Local Government Settlement was for one year only (2022-23). This was disappointing given the comments made by the Chancellor about multi-year settlements at the time of the Spending Review/Budget 2021.
- Government formulas for assessing future local government spending levels were complex and based on an assumption that council tax would increase by 2.99%.
- The settlement for 2022-23 was expected to be a roll-over of previous main funding elements with the new home bonus based on a government calculation expected to be slightly higher than the figure mentioned in the report.
- The ring-fenced public health grant would be essential for the services that the Council provided.
- There was nothing mentioned in the provisional settlement about net zero carbon targets.
- The Council was assessing the costs new zero carbon targets which were expected to be shared with Councillors after the next Council meeting.

11.4 After further detailed discussion it was:

### **RESOLVED**

#### **That the Committee:**

- **Note the update provided on the Provisional Local Government Settlement for 2022-23, considering implications for NCC; and**



- **Note that Cabinet will consider the implications of the settlement in the context of the proposed 2023-24 Budget when it meets on 31 January 2022 and Scrutiny Committee will have an opportunity to further consider this issue when it meets on 16 February 2022.**

## 12 **Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme**

12.1 The annexed report (12) was received.

12.2 The Democratic Support and Scrutiny Manager drew Cllrs attention to changes in the work programme previously reported to the Committee which were highlighted in the appendices to the report.

### 12.3 **RESOLVED**

**That the Committee:**

- **Note the revised forward work programme as set out in the appendix to the report.**
- **Note changes to the Scrutiny Committee forward work programme format**

The meeting concluded at 2.08 pm

**Chair**